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FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9055
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 1799
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 0870
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 0500
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 0952
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 3125

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 000731

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SUBJECT: UN COORDINATOR VORONTSOV FOCUSED ON MISSING
KUWAITI ARCHIVES

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Ambassador met May 8 with UN High-Level Coordinator Yuli Vorontsov. Vorontsov was visiting Kuwait in preparation for his next report to the Security Council on missing Kuwaiti persons and property, due June 6. (He was accompanied by UN Political Affairs officer Victor Poliakov.) Vorontsov said in addition to the cases of POWs and missing persons, the GOK remains focused primarily on the return of missing Kuwaiti government archives seized during the Iraqi occupation. The Kuwaitis are nervous that sensitive government records may still emerge in Iraq with the potential to cause embarrassment to the GOK.

12. (C) Vorontsov said the record is cold on where the archives might be, but the Kuwaitis are focused on two former government officials who they believe may have information about their whereabouts. The first is "Abdo Hamud" who Vorontsov described as Saddam's former personal secretary. Vorontsov believes he is in U.S. custody in Baghdad. The second is former Foreign Minister (and more famously GOI spokesman during Iraq's liberation) Mohammed Saeed Al-Sahhaf. Vorontsov said Al-Sahhaf, now living in the Abu Dhabi, told him before the war that the Kuwaiti archives were "delivered to the mother ministries," i.e., the Iraqi ministries responsible for the particular Kuwaiti government documents in question.

13. (C) Vorontsov speculated that some documents may remain in the ministries, while others may have been destroyed or remain at a central location. Vorontsov said he may seek to meet with Al-Sahhaf, though he is not sure whether the Emirati government will welcome that. In addition, he asked whether the U.S. could help with information on Hamud. Vorontsov provided a copy of letter to Ambassador Bolton dated May 15, 2006 asking for assistance from the U.S. in interviewing former regime officials who may have information on the archives.

14. (C) At the request of the GOK, Vorontsov was proceeding to Amman to inspect some Iraqi aircraft for spare parts belonging to Kuwait. He noted that the spare parts found in the inspection of the Iraqi plane in Tunisia had yielded mostly undocumented junk, with the exception of one jet engine.

15. (C) Comment: Vorontsov is a spry 78. When asked if he is writing about any of his experiences as a senior Soviet/Russian diplomat, he responded in the negative -- "nobody wants to read the memoirs of old people except other old people." He said that for the current generation of Russians "history begins in 1990." He expected the current Defense Minister to replace Putin and to operate in the same

way as Putin. He saw slow improvement in the Russian economy, but could not grasp where the many new Russian billionaires are getting all their money.

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LeBaron